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Summary record of the 32nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 17 December 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/59/L.53: modalities, format and organization of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly (A/59/613 and A/C.5/59/25)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/59/L.53 (A/C.5/59/25), recalled that draft resolution A/59/L.53 called on the General Assembly to decide that the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly would be held from 14 to 16 September 2005 in New York. The statement of programme budget implications gave details of the costs associated with the preparatory arrangements for the High-level Meeting, which amounted to approximately $1.7 million.

2. In light of available resources, it was estimated that approximately $600,000 of that amount could be absorbed. The net additional resource requirements, estimated at $1,060,700, would be distributed across sections 1, 2, 28 and 29D of the budget.

3. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/59/613), said that the Secretary-General's statement should have provided a better analysis of resource requirements and of possibilities for absorption and redeployment. In paragraph 5 of its report, the Advisory Committee had pointed out a number of areas where savings could be made and, under the circumstances, it was recommending that every effort should be made to absorb the requested amount.

4. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that he agreed with both the content and tone of the report of the Advisory Committee and therefore wished to endorse its recommendation.

5. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) said that she had not fully understood the reasoning behind the Advisory Committee's recommendation. She was particularly concerned about the reference in paragraph 3 of its report to the reordering of priorities within the Department of Public Information, since the Secretariat should not embark upon such an exercise without a specific mandate from the General Assembly.

6. The Advisory Committee was of the opinion that the Secretary-General's statement contained insufficient information to justify the request for additional resources, but she took the view that its own recommendations were not based on substantive data. Accordingly, she called on the Committee to endorse the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications and to review the situation in the context of the second performance report.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

7. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the text of the draft decision would read: "The Fifth Committee wishes to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/59/L.53, the Fifth Committee would revert to the consideration of the related resource requirements in the context of its consideration of the second performance report for the biennium 2004-2005 at its sixtieth session".

8. **Mr. Al-Ansari** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group fully supported the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, the aim of which was to undertake a comprehensive review of progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It was therefore in favour of approving a charge against the contingency fund in order to meet the requirements of the Meeting.

9. Unfortunately, the Advisory Committee had failed to provide adequate justification for its recommendation that the requested amount should be absorbed and the Group was therefore unable to endorse its report.

10. The Group attached great importance to General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 and, in that connection, took the view that recommendations made by the Secretary-General should be financed under the provisions of the contingency fund. However, in view of current time constraints, the Group was prepared, on an exceptional and extraordinary basis, to agree to revert to the issue in the context of the consideration of

the second performance report at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

11. **The Chairman** said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision.

12. *The draft decision was adopted.*

13. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Qatar on beha'f of the Group of 77 and China. Efforts to absorb expenses without using the contingency fund were not helpful to the Organization, since they affected the fragile balance established by General Assembly resolution 58/270.

14. **Mr. Zellenrath** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that reverting to the issue in the context of the second performance report meant that the Secretariat would have sufficient resources to prepare for the High-level Plenary Meeting. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that every effort should be made to absorb the requested amount.

15. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

16. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He expressed concern at the suggestions contained in paragraphs 3 and 5 of the Advisory Committee's report. Paragraph 3 referred to the reordering of priorities within the Department of Public Information. Any such reordering, however, must be mandated by the General Assembly. Moreover, the Department in question was already working with the minimum possible resources and any further redeployment would paralyse its activities.

17. He supported the High-level Plenary Meeting and expected the Secretariat to make use of funds from savings to cover its cost. He stood ready to revert to the issue in the context of the second performance report.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.